OMANI WOMEN'S CHILDREN

*Tufula, 15, and Amina, 12, are members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG). They formed part of the first platoon of women's militants to receive full training for membership in the People's Liberation Army. They were interviewed in South Yemen by Fred Halliday, whose article first appeared in The Black Dwarf, a socialist magazine published in England. Included here are excerpts of this article.*

WHY ARE YOU FIGHTING AND SUPPORTING THE REVOLUTION?

Tufula: Because British imperialism is killing our men and our women. We are fighting to get them out.

WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY DO?

Tufula: My family are shepherds in the western province, and I used to work with them. For three months of the year we grew crops, and for the rest of the time we were nomads, herding our flocks. I never went to school or learned to read. I joined the Front two years ago, and my parents tried to stop me. But I felt I should join my comrades.

AMINA, CAN YOU TELL US HOW YOU CAME TO JOIN THE FRONT?

Amina: Well, I was in Salala, the capital, and you can't escape by land as it is surrounded by a big fence. So I escaped by sea with my brother. That was last September.

WHY DID YOU RUN AWAY?

Amina: Imperialism. My father was a poor farmer, he got 4-5 rupees a day. We were very poor. So my brother and I got an old car-tire for 8 rials and we swam in the sea for eight hours til we reached the coastline controlled by the Front.

WEREN'T YOU COLD AND FRIGHTENED? COULD YOU SWIM?
Amina: I couldn't swim well, and we got very cold and hungry and thirsty. But it is better to die in the sea than be captured by the British.

WHO THOUGHT OF ESCAPING, YOU OR YOUR BROTHER?
Amina: Everyone things of escaping.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE IN SALALA? HAVE YOU SEEN BRITISH OFFICERS OR THE SULTAN?
Amina: Sometimes I'd see British officers out shopping, but they generally stay in their base. I've never seen the Sultan, he's dead, though his spies say he is alive.

HOW DID YOU GET TO HEAR ABOUT THE FRONT IN SALALA?
Amina: People found leaflets against the Sultan, they said "This is good and so is the revolution."

TUFULA, SINCE JOINING THE FRONT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
Tufula: Well, at first I was in the militia, the Popular Guard, and then took part in defending Shahbout when the enemy attacked it in the summer of 1969. There was a battle for 24 hours and I carried water to the fighters up front. I think I was the first woman to join the army in the western area.

WHERE DID YOU LEARN TO SPEAK ARABIC?
Tufula: The Front taught me, and I learned from working with comrades in the Front. But it is still difficult.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT FROM THE FRONT SINCE YOU FLED, AMINA?
Amina: I've learned literacy, politics and revolution.

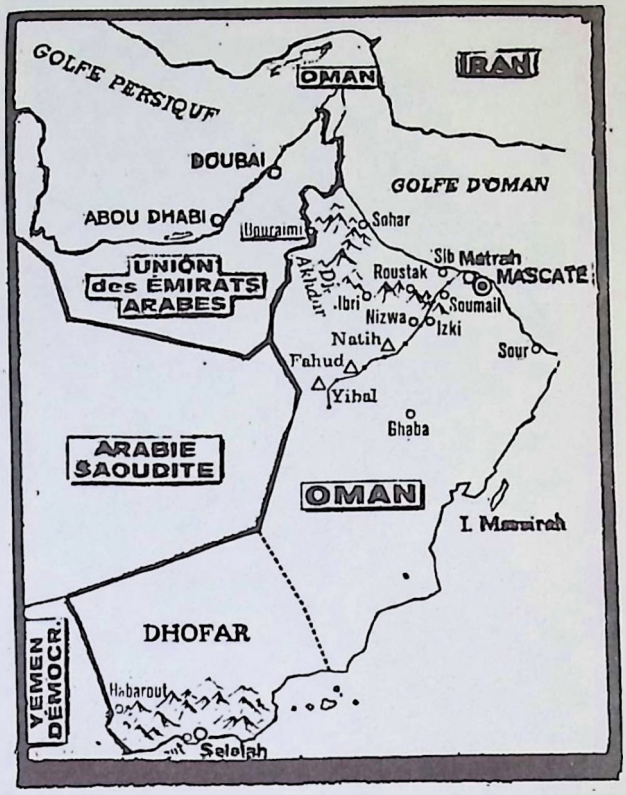
DO YOU EVER MISS YOUR PARENTS?
Amina: I don't think about my parents, I think about the revolution.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN GENERALLY, AND OF THE SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE CONTRACTS HERE?
Tufula: It is a pity to ask something from a person if you're going to marry him. If I want a man I'll marry him because I want to and he won't have to buy me. Anyway, there is no difference between men and women. I am a woman, and I've seen I can do the same as they do. Before the revolution women used to be bought and sold and dispensed with like animals. Now they must know their rights and take part in the struggle along with everyone else.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ISLAM? ARE YOU RELIGIOUS?
Tufula: I am in a society of people who pray, and I am one of them.

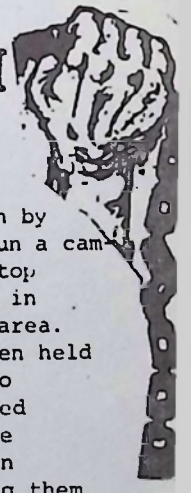
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION?
Amina: They are like us. They are fighting for liberation, and they have socialist aims.

WHAT ROLE WILL WOMEN PLAY AFTER THE REVOLUTION?
Tufula: There is a big role awaiting women. They will have to farm and learn to read, write and type.




AFTER THE REVOLUTION, WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO ABROAD AND VISIT ANY OTHER COUNTRY?
Tufula: I'd like to visit the countries that are helping us, People's China and the People's Republic of South Yemen.

# SUPPORT OMANI WOMEN



The Sultan of Oman and Muscat, urged on by his British military advisors, has begun a campaign of mass arrests and torture to stop the advance of the liberation struggle in Dhofar, Oman, and throughout the Gulf area. On June 20, 1973, 74 Omanis who had been held for six months or more and subjected to severe torture were tried and sentenced to death and shot by firing squads. The following day, the remainder were given long prison terms, many for life. Among them are 8 women: Zaimah al-Kundi, Fatimah Al-Hashar, Aisha Al-Farsi, Rahiman Ali Khaflan, Zaboot Bint Nasser, Thabat Bint Fulayfil, Saeda Al-Ka'a dawi, Mariam Al-Hashar. Some of the women are pregnant, and have been tortured. A worldwide campaign of protests and letters to the Sultan and to the UN Human Rights Commission is underway, and your help is needed. Letters should be sent to: Fahd Manmood Al-Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultanate of Oman. Letters should also be sent to the International Commission on Human Rights, New York, New York, asking that they condemn the conditions of political prisoners in Oman, and that Oman be expelled from the U.N.

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